

Abstract 151

TITLE: HIV Prevention in the Disability Community

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ISSUE: Available research suggests that those with developmental, psychiatric and other disabilities are at particularly high risk for contracting STDs generally and HIV as well. However, few resource available to guide prevention efforts with these groups, and fewer still for these groups in rural areas.

SETTING: This program was designed for presentation to small groups of individuals with disabilities in the rural Thumb Region of Michigan.

PROJECT: Based on work by **Susser et al (e.g. 1941)** and materials from Young Adult Institute, programming was designed to meet the need for prevention among individuals with disabilities in rural settings. Pre and post measures were designed to assess knowledge gains, perceptions of personal risk and other key variables. Presentations were translated into the Spanish dialect common in local migrant labor camps and into ASL for those with hearing impairments. Program focus is on risks, risk reduction and general knowledge.

RESULTS: Pre and post measures indicate a great variability in the amount of pre-program knowledge possessed by participants, depending on the primary disability. However, post tests indicate that all individuals benefited from the program and were pleased with it.

LESSONS LEARNED: HIV prevention programming for those with disabilities must be flexible to adapt to both the audience and the setting, including both scheduling/length, number of sessions and materials. People with disabilities benefit from and appreciate prevention programming sensitive to their needs.

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